

## EVENT THAT MAKES NEW YORKERS WONDER WHY SHOULD SPIRIT OF MORTAL BE PROUD?

By CARLTON TEN EYCK

New York, Feb. 11.—O, why should the spirit of mortal be proud? This thought came home to many a Broadwayfarer the other night, along with the realization that the Old Man with the Scythe is no respecter of time nor place. It was just at theater curtain time and Longacre Square was filled with its nightly hurrying, bustling throng of pleasure seekers.

High hats glistened, ermine cloaks flashed an occasional glimpse of gleaming shoulders and alabaster necks; taxicabs whizzed and whirled madly around corners, while the white-gloved traffic policeman had to wig-wag all their fingers at once to keep things moving and protect pedestrians from the vehicular juggernauts. In short, it was a typical Broadway night at the rush hour, with wealth, fashion, beauty and pleasure rampant on a field argent. Had some modern financial duke perched himself "high in a windowed niche" of the Astor and shouted: "On with the dance, let joy be unconfined," it would not have been out of the picture.

In the midst of the hub-bub, women's shrieks were heard and a Broadway surface car was halted precipitately at Forty-fourth street in the very center of the pleasure seekers. The screams came from the car and were occasioned by the collapse in the aisle of a man. The car crew picked up the fallen man and carried him to the street, where he was laid out on the concrete base of one of the "white lights." Then the car went on its way. There was not a soul about who knew the man and no person in authority was left with him by the street car men. They simply laid the man in the middle of Broadway and went on about their business. At first the fellow lay utterly alone, moaning almost inaudibly. Then a hurrying pedestrian, crossing the

whirling rapids of traffic, and halted perforce by a taxicab, looked down and saw the prostrate form.

He stopped to look at the man and found no sign of life. He loosened the collar and clothing and felt over the heart. This was enough for the crowd. Instantly, almost miraculously, the lamp standard was surrounded by an eager, chattering mob of hundreds. There were bare-headed women in shimmering theater gowns, men in evening clothes, ordinary pedestrians and ragged newsboys and char-women, rubbing elbows in the common bond of curiosity. "Who is he? What is he? What happened? Is he dead? Was it a taxicab?" and a thousand and one other queries came from everywhere. And in answer there were a hundred wrong explanations. Nobody really knew what had happened, for the street car was gone and nobody had any idea of the man's identity.

Suddenly a little man with chin-whiskers wormed his way importantly through the crowd. "I'm a doctor," he said, and the curious throng parted and made way. The professional man made an examination. Then he turned abruptly.

"He's dead," was all he said.

Such a change as then came over the crowd. Men's hats came off and women wept. And the throng melted as quickly as it had formed. An interesting accident was one thing and the presence of death was another. None lingered. In a second the body of the dead man was alone on its little island, isolated between the two streams of hurrying traffic. Then came an old man, a little man with a frayed coat and dilapidated hat. Boldly he walked over to the body on its improvised slab. Tenderly he stooped down and fastened the clothing which the self-styled doctor had left disordered. Then with his fingers the old man closed the eyes